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Viewing cable 09ATHENS1519, GREECE ARRESTS SUSPECTED MEMBERS OF DOMESTIC TERRORIST GROUP

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09ATHENS1519**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09ATHENS1519	2009-09-30 07:26	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET	Embassy Athens

Appears in these articles:

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OO RUEHAG RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHNP RUEHROV RUEHSL
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019/09/30
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SUBJECT: GREECE ARRESTS SUSPECTED MEMBERS OF DOMESTIC TERRORIST GROUP

REF: ATHENS 1507

Summary

¶1. (SBU) In the most high-profile arrests of domestic terrorist suspects since 2003, Greek police raided two houses in the Athens districts of Halandri and Galatsi on September 23, and arrested four individuals who were subsequently charged September 25, in connection with three bombings carried out by the "Conspiracy of Fire Nuclei" from June to September of this year. Police said they found a complete "cooking pot" bomb (the group's MO in previous attacks) and other bomb-making equipment at the sites. Citing police sources, Greek media is speculating that the suspects may lead police to other terrorist groups responsible for bigger attacks, including the large ammonium nitrate bomb that exploded outside Athens Stock Exchange September 2 (within minutes of one of the Fire Nuclei bombings) and the January 2007 RPG attack on the U.S. Embassy, both of which were claimed by Revolutionary Struggle. End Summary.

The Facts

¶2. (S) In a conversation with the Ambassador on September 24, 2009, Greek Ministry of Interior Secretary General Constantinos Bitsios said the suspects, all in their early twenties, were associated with the Conspiracy of Fire Nuclei and were swept up after Greek police identified their Halandri apartment as a place of interest. Inside, police found bombs and associated materials identical to those used in previous attacks by the group. Bitsios praised the low-key cooperation the Greek government has received from U.S. and UK experts, and said the government looked forward to further cooperation.

¶3. (SBU) Four of the individuals arrested, Panagiotis Massouras, Charilaos Hatzimichelakis, Emmanouil Giospas, and Myrto Pentaeloglou, were charged September 25, 2009, with a variety of counts connected to three similar bombings: the July 12, 2009, bombing at the home of former Deputy Public Order Minister Panagiotis Hinofotis, the September 2, 2009, bombing at the Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace in Thessaloniki (which occurred within minutes of the big blast at the Athens Stock Exchange), and a September 23, 2009, bombing outside the apartment of opposition PASOK party economy spokesperson Louka Katseli and her husband Gerassimos Arsenis, who served in five different ministerial positions in previous PASOK governments. No one was hurt in these attacks. The Conspiracy of Fire Nuclei are also believed to be responsible for a large number of other, small-scale attacks, and have long been seen as a particularly violent outgrowth of Greece's urban "anarchist" community. Police announced that they are seeking the arrest of six other individuals, five Greeks and one Albanian, in the case.

Comment

¶4. (C) Conspiracy of Fire Nuclei is not the biggest fish in Greece's domestic terrorist scene, but if the evidence is as strong as Bitsios has told us the arrests are a major achievement for a government that had not managed to lock up a single member of a named terrorist group since 2003. Greek officials have been making a concerted effort to crack the terrorist and extremist groups ever since the December 2008 riots and the subsequent increase in domestic terrorist attacks, when Bitsios came over from the Prime Minister's office to the Ministry of Interior. In addition to energizing the investigations, the government has also enacted legislative reforms this year to authorize greater use of

surveillance cameras, phone taps, and the creation of a DNA database. These tools should benefit whatever government comes to power after the October 4 elections in pursuing domestic terrorists.

15. (C) There is extensive reporting in the Greek media suggesting police believe this investigation will open leads that will allow them to reach the more prominent and violent domestic terrorist groups, Revolutionary Struggle and Sect of Revolutionaries. According to these reports, police believe some of the individuals arrested served as liaisons to other groups. While it is common belief that domestic terrorist groups know and coordinate with each other - and the almost simultaneous timing of the two September 2, 2009, bombings suggests coordination - we do not yet know if police will be able to make these links in this case. MEGA-TV reported September 26, 2009, that police believe one of the arrested individuals was involved in the January 2007 RPG attack on the U.S. Embassy by Revolutionary Struggle. However, there is no evidence of this at present. We have long worked with Greek law enforcement to try to obtain a breakthrough in this case, and we will coordinate closely to see what evidence connected to these new arrests might produce progress on that case.
McCarthy